



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



WELCOME HOME 152ND

Hundreds of family members, friends and community supporters gathered at T.F. Riggs High School in Pierre Tuesday, to welcome home 68 Soldiers from the South Dakota Army National Guard's 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion. The unit just returned from a five-month deployment in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. A ceremony was held in their honor, which included speakers Gov. Dennis Daugaard, Pierre Mayor Laurie Gill and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG.

The Pierre-based 152nd deployed in July with a mission to provide multi-functional combat support and combat service support to forces throughout southern Afghanistan. Multi-functional areas include supply, transportation, maintenance and ordnance support.

"The mission that you performed was critical...and by all accounts, you performed spectacularly," said Reisch. "When a unit returns, it's a great relief to the families, spouses, friends and employers who have gone without the companionship and assistance of these fine Soldiers. Your contribution to this deployment has not gone unnoticed and this nation is forever in your debt."

While in Afghanistan, the 152nd provided logistical command and control and coordination support for a task force within regional commands in the south and southwest, with units located at five forward operating bases. To the unit's credit, they improved surveillance and reconnaissance along major supply routes by 50 percent from previous operations – identifying 450 credible threats that were addressed to make convoy operations safer for U.S. and coalition forces. The unit also maintained a 98 percent readiness rate on all their task force's equipment, and they provided oversight of contracts totaling \$48 million. They executed the movement of 6.5 million pounds of supplies during 150 convoys – covering more than 100,000 miles – to 35 different operating bases. These supplies supported more than 30,000 coalition troops.

The 152nd also managed a central issue facility, which maintains more than 150,000 different lines of property worth more than \$26 million. The unit processed more than 80,000 transactions of those supplies.

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SANTA AND MANY ELVES SHARE THEIR HOLIDAY SPIRIT WITH VETERANS AT THE STATE VETERANS HOME

The spirit of Christmas was shared with the residents at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home throughout the month of December. Veterans Service Organizations, Elks, school groups, South Dakota National Guard, community leaders and businesses all took time out of their hectic holiday schedules to bring holiday cheer.

That cheer came in the form of gifts, music, entertainment, food, financial contributions, caroling, game playing, etc.



"We are truly blessed to have the outstanding support, statewide - not only at Christmas, but throughout the year," said SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman. "While there are many traditions held around the world this time of year, one thing most of them have in common is love. We never forget that without

the support of our partners, we would not exist," said Zimmerman. "There is no more appropriate time to express our warmest appreciation for our association and your friendship. May the blessings of the holiday season be yours without number. Happy Holidays"



1742ND SOLDIERS HONORED AT DEPLOYMENT CEREMONY IN HARRISBURG

About 160 Soldiers of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 1742nd Transportation Company were honored during a deployment ceremony Saturday, Dec. 14, in Harrisburg. Hundreds of family members, friends and community supporters gathered at the Harrisburg High School auditorium to see the Soldiers off as they depart for a year-long tour in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Speakers for the ceremony included Gov. Dennis Daugaard, Sen. John Thune, Congresswoman Kristi Noem and Brig. Gen. Kevin Griese, assistant adjutant general of the SDARNG.

"We are here today to send the 1742nd off with our well wishes," said Daugaard. "You are the epitome of competency, dedication and reliability and you represent the best of South Dakota."

"South Dakotans have always punched above their weight when it comes to answering the call to duty," said Thune. "We have a lot of men and women who are here today who are going to answer that call again - and we say thank you."

The mission of the Sioux Falls and Flandreau-based 1742nd is to provide transportation of both dry and refrigerated containerized cargo, general non-containerized cargo and bulk water and fuel products. For the past year, the 1742nd has undergone training at home and in Fort McCoy, Wis., to prepare them to move equipment and supplies.

"We are extremely proud of you and your unit," said Griese. "You have executed a rigorous training program preparing you for this deployment, and there is no doubt you are ready."

"In this deployment to Afghanistan you are going to undertake a critical role...the supply chain is absolutely vital to the success of any military operation," said Daugaard. "The Army cannot succeed without food, fuel, equipment and supplies."

1742nd commander, Capt. Tyler Gerlach, also spoke during the ceremony and has every confidence his Soldiers are ready. "I've watched these men and women train and build their team, and I know without a doubt they have what it takes," he said. "It was a great experience to come here as a new member, as a commander, and watch the transformation from one year ago to where we are today. It is an awesome sight to see them stand and posture themselves like warriors at the end of our battle drills at Fort McCoy."

This will be the third mobilization for the 1742nd, which deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003-2004 and in support of Operation Desert Shield/Storm in 1990-1991.

About a third of the 1742nd Soldiers are veterans. For the remaining members, it will be their first deployment to a combat environment. Both Soldiers and family members expressed anxiousness of the upcoming experience.

Despite any uncertainty, Gerlach knows his unit is in good hands.

"These Soldiers are trained, ready and I have no problem putting my life in their hands, as they would put theirs in mine," said Gerlach.

The 1742nd reported to Fort Hood, Texas, to complete several weeks of theater-specific training prior to deployment overseas.



STATE VETERANS HOME UPDATE

Construction for the new state veterans home continues. You can view the first rock blast at the construction site by visiting this link: <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteranshome/Features.aspx>

89TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The 89th Session of the South Dakota Legislature will convene at approximately 1:00 pm on Tuesday, January 14, 2014, with Governor Daugaard's State of the State Address. This year's session is scheduled for 38 legislative days, with the main run concluding March 14. March 31 is reserved for considering gubernatorial vetoes.

Legislative actions can be viewed at:

http://legis.sd.gov/Legislative_Session/Default.aspx?Session=Eighty-Ninth

Legislative bills can be tracked or monitored at:

http://legis.sd.gov/Legislative_Session/Bills/

Live broadcasts of legislative actions and committee meetings are provided by South Dakota Public Broadcasting at: http://legis.sd.gov/Legislative_Session/Media/rss.aspx



SANTA VISITS SDNG MUSEUM



Santa took time out of his busy schedule this weekend to stop and visit children at the South Dakota National Guard Museum in Pierre.

While there Santa viewed all the changes that had been made at the museum since his last visit. He assured Museum Director Sonja Johnson that due to all her outstanding efforts at the museum, she was on the "NICE" list!!!!



Upcoming Events

2014

Jan. 14—South Dakota Legislative Session Opens
Jan. 18- 129th MPAD Reintegration 30 Day Yellow Ribbon Event—Rapid City
Jan. 24-26—American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Crossroads—Huron
Jan. 25-26- 235th MP Reintegration 30 Day Yellow Ribbon Event—Chamberlain Cedar Shore Resort
Jan. 31—SD Veterans Council Breakfast with Legislators—6:30 am
Feb 2-4—VFW Legislative Conference—Post 2038—Pierre
Feb. 6—American Legion Legislative Reception—Post 8—Pierre—Washington Pavilion—Sioux Falls
Feb. 15—Valentines for Veterans Concert—
Feb 15-16- 152nd Reintegration 30 Day Yellow Ribbon Event—Sioux Falls
Feb. 18-19—SDDVA New VSO Orientation—Sioux Falls
Apr. 5-6—152nd Yellow Ribbon
May 2-4—DAV Conference—Ramkota Hotel—Aberdeen
Jun. 19-22—American Legion Conference—Ramkota Hotel—Pierre
Aug. 6—DOL Veterans Job Fair—Augustana College Elmen Center—10:00 am—2:00 pm
Aug. 25-27—SDDVA Veterans Benefits School—Ramkota Hotel—Pierre

SDDVA HOLIDAY HOURS

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Military will close at 5:00 p.m., Monday, December 23, 2013, for Christmas. Both Departments will reopen for business at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 26.

Both Departments will close again on New Year's Day and will reopen for business at 8:00 a.m. Thursday, January 2, 2014.

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